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Initiation of Self-Appraisal

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INITIATION OF SELF-APPRAISAL

by

Rodney A. Briggs, Dean

May 7, 1962
Faculty Meeting

October 31, 1959 marks the date of the creation of the collegiate program at Morris as it was at that time that the Board of Regents announced the establishment of a one year experimental program at Morris to determine if western Minnesota would support such an institution established in the western area of the state.

The University of Minnesota facility at Morris had been in operation for 50 years and during that time a series of educational programs had been offered, each change representing a change in the needs of western Minnesota. In the period from 1950-1960 the West Central School of Agriculture program was operating a full four-year secondary program. The program, designed for farm youth, was operated as a six-month boarding school with 90 to 95 percent of its students residing in the dormitories on the campus. With the establishment of the college program, the School of Agriculture was to be phased out.

To implement the announced intention of the Board of Regents, J. L. Morrill, then President of the University, announced in November of 1959, the formation of a Morris Campus Advisory Committee with Malcolm M. Willey, Vice President of Academic Administration, as chairman.

The members of this committee were selected from all areas of the University and were drawn from the senior University administrative staff. This followed a pattern established a decade earlier when the University took over operation of the Duluth State Teachers College as a branch of the University.

The Morris Campus Advisory Committee consisted of the following members:

R. E. Summers, Dean, Admissions and Records
E. W. McDiarmid, Dean, College of Science, Literature and the Arts
Lloyd M. Short, Chairman, Department of Political Science and
Chairman, Senate Committee on Education
Marcia Edwards, Associate Dean, College of Education
T. H. Fenske, Associate Dean, Institute of Agriculture
Frank Verbrugge, Associate Dean, Institute of Technology
C. T. Johnson, Assistant Vice President, Business Administration

At the Board of Regents meeting on December 11, 1959, the official name of the new college at Morris was announced as "The University of Minnesota, Morris" and Rodney A. Briggs was named Acting Dean and appointed to the Morris Campus Advisory Committee.

The announced experimental collegiate offering was to be conducted without legislative funds. Funds for the first year's operation were made available by funds released due to the phase out of the School of Agriculture, from gifts from citizens of western Minnesota and operational and administrative costs being absorbed by the West Central School of Agriculture.

At this point we must explore the general premises established by the Morris Campus Advisory Committee at the beginning of the deliberations on the Morris program.

- a. It was agreed that whatever curriculum recommendations "may be formulated must conform to the high standards of academic excellence" that is the hallmark of instruction offered by the University in all of its collegiate departments.
- b. It was further agreed that the program at Morris must be regarded "as an integral part of the total University".
- c. It was agreed, third, that the general policies that apply to the University as a whole should apply at Morris, "admitting only such adaptations as the fact of physical separation may dictate".

In a report to the Board of Regents of the University on September 30, 1960, the following were listed as considerations in planning for the Morris program.

1. The need of higher education facilities in western Minnesota has been postulated by many groups and is supported by low college matriculation from high schools in western Minnesota.
2. Collegiate attitudes have not been strongly developed in western Minnesota because of a relatively low proportion of college graduates in the area, poor or nonexistent counseling in the secondary schools, and a history of high income related college attendance in the area. The pattern of the parents' education of the 1960 enrollees at the University of Minnesota, Morris supports the non-college attitude in the area.
3. Vocational-educational objectives of the new enrollees indicates a vocational selection based on student contacts with college educated residents of the area. The teaching profession is the only major reservoir of college educated residents in many of the smaller communities of western Minnesota. Of the new enrollees approximately 30% indicated preference of education for their educational vocational objective.
4. The faculty was selected, based on teaching and research experience and training. Each will be required to pursue intellectual improvement through independent study and research. Each will be encouraged to develop strong student-teacher relationships. Course loads shall be restricted where possible to a 12-hour week exposure or less.
5. An extra-curricular program of the normal student clubs and activities, intramural sports and inter-collegiate athletics will be developed to present a strong campus program for resident students and non-commuters living in Morris.

6. The service aspects of the program for area residents and educators offer many possibilities for development. A Psychological-Educational Clinic has been planned for area secondary school workers for the first year. A University Artist Course Series of nationally known artists has been planned for the first year.
7. The faculty has been made mindful of the quality aspects of the entire program and that the highest standards of academic performance must prevail at all times.
8. A major effort has been made to coordinate all aspects of the Morris program with the central administration on the Minneapolis campus and with the number of colleges, schools, and institutions represented on the ~~Morris~~ *Minneapolis* and St. Paul campuses.
9. Certain aspects of the Morris program should remain flexible and experimental as the newness of the program makes an ideal testing ground for new concepts in education. The faculty will be encouraged to utilize resources to the fullest--to take the best from traditional collegiate experience and to make a better program possible.
10. Individual student advisement and counseling, small classes, and the attainment of individual excellence by the students shall mark the program planned for Morris.

The above listed points were outlined just one week following the initiation of the first college class at Morris. Faculty at that time numbered 13 and a freshman class of 237 students comprised the human resources at Morris. During the first year of operation, requests were submitted to and granted by the Minnesota State Legislature for operational funds to add the sophomore and junior years at Morris to insure the orderly development of the college. The first year experiment to determine area and student interest has been followed by the academic experiment to determine the many ways a college at Morris will develop and grow.

Necessarily the program has been developed in the tradition of the distinct American Liberal Arts college, however, sufficient flexibility has been incorporated into the planning to insure the experimental approach to the future growth of this, the newest college of the University.

As projected before the initiation of the collegiate program, the objectives of the collegiate program are as follows:

1. To develop within the framework of the Liberal Arts concept, a distinguished four year college program leading to the B.A. degree. As a college of the University of Minnesota, its standards for faculty qualifications and course offerings are the same as other campuses of the University.

2. To develop within the collegiate offering, preprofessional curriculum for the professional schools within the University of Minnesota or other institutions.
3. To develop within the collegiate offering, a distinguished teacher preparation program for the training of teachers.
4. To develop a program to serve the citizens of Minnesota in offering educational and cultural opportunities as a campus of the University.

It is now in our second year of operation that we must review what has taken place in the past and plan for the future. It is the prerogative of the faculty to determine the academic destiny of this institution.

The framework of evaluation and critical self-appraisal lies in a self-study by the administration and faculty at Morris. To properly appraise the present program and lay the foundation for the future, requires the involvement of all faculty. It also requires the review of our educational heritage to determine our course of action for the future.

Specifically, a requirement which the University of Minnesota, Morris must meet is the necessary self-survey for a teacher preparation institution in the state of Minnesota. Over and above the specific requirements of the teacher preparation institution, we must embody into our self-study the appraisal of the collegiate program in meeting the four objectives as previously outlined.

Rather than delineate the developing program, a number of questions must be asked which necessarily will have to be evaluated and answered through faculty action. A great number of other questions must also be raised hence this is just a partial list.

PHILOSOPHY AND ORGANIZATION

What is a liberal education?

What is the relationship of one unit of the collegiate program to the whole?

Should a small liberal arts college develop subject discipline departments?

What are the roles of the non-instructional aspects of art, music, and athletics?

Is the concept of lower and upper division course offerings justified?

Is a two year general education requirement needed within the framework of a liberal arts program?

Can procedures be revised to insure communication with administration and other faculty members?

What is a good student extra-curricular program?

Upon what criteria should student selection and admission policy be based?

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CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

How can we prevent proliferation of course offerings?

Can we improve instructional techniques?

What can be done to improve the educational program in depth as well as in breadth for the outstanding student?

Can undergraduates be expected to contribute to our undergraduate seminar?

FACULTY

How can the faculty be organized to discharge effectively those items requiring faculty action?

What constitutes faculty competency?

Can interest in the undergraduate student be improved?

How can we insure faculty professional improvement?

Within what framework can stimulating faculty seminars be organized?

There are many other questions that could be asked yet these should convey the kinds of questions that must be explored within the scope of a self-survey. Each faculty member will be asked to commit himself to the philosophy of the self-study and to contribute to its development.

The year 1962-63 has been designated as the year of self-appraisal and evaluation. The necessary timing of the actions of the self-survey committees will be worked out by the central self-study committee.

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